

**TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD - PUBLIC HEARING
PERMITTING RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS WITHIN THE IG AND IR DISTRICTS
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2014 7:15 P.M.**

President Slifka opened the Public Hearing at 10:44 p.m.

President Slifka: We will open the 7:15 public hearing. This is permitting residential dwellings within the IG and IR districts. Roll call, please, Ms. Labrot?

Councilors Barnes, Captain, Casperson, Davidoff, Doar, Hall, Kindall, and Slifka were Present. Mr. Kavalier was present as Alternate for Councilor Cantor who was absent.

President Slifka: Here. Okay, we have a presentation from Mr. Alair.

Mr. Alair: Thank you. I promise to be brief. The concept behind this ordinance is similar to what you approved recently which allows the return of residential uses within certain commercial zones. We're extending that into the IG and IR industrial zones, as well. These are zones that we find typically in the southeast quadrant of town, particularly along New Park Avenue where we have transit-oriented development, kind of concept coming in. And the idea is to permit residential uses, multi-family, which are currently prohibited in those zones. The ordinance reintroduces standards under which those would be allowed. And if you look at the very back, what's very difficult to see, it amends our schedule of permitting main uses to add residential uses to those zones. That's it.

President Slifka: Okay. Any questions for Mr. Alair? There's actually – assuming nobody on the signup sheet but I don't think it made its way here. Okay, no one on the signup sheet. Anybody not signed who wishes to speak to the application? See none, go ahead Mr. Captain.

Councilor Captain: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Pat, why? Why has this come up and why are we doing this now?

Mr. Alair: I think it was a follow-on to the discussion about doing it in business zones. I got involved in it a little bit later than perhaps the beginning. I think there were some discussions between Mark McGovern, Ron, Todd about the possibility of looking towards transit-oriented development in that part of town. The possibility that there might be interest in doing residential. And it has to be as part of a mixed use. It can't be standalone. And so the idea sort of crept in and we thought rather than have to be in a situation where we're amending the ordinances because the development is coming – is here, rather. Let's do it now.

Councilor Captain: Makes total sense. Basically the bus way is sort of the answer.

Mr. Alair: I think that's the driver.

Councilor Captain: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Alair: No pun intended.

President Slifka: Mr. Barnes, go ahead.

Councilor Barnes: I think that was the answer to my question. Pat, you used the phrase transit-oriented...

Mr. Alair: Transit-oriented development.

Councilor Barnes: Development.

Mr. Alair: Which is code for bus way development.

Councilor Barnes: Mr. Captain's just a little smarter than I am. Thank you.

President Slifka: Okay, anyone else? Go ahead, Mrs. Hall.

Councilor Hall: Thank you. Is there any safety factors involved – people living in industrial zones – that might have been part of the original reasoning for the zoning in the first place?

Mr. Alair: I promised Ron I'd keep each of these hearings to under two minutes and my presentation made it but just keeping clear here. The whole concept of zoning was originally about separation of uses that we incompatible. And now that we have – Euclid versus Ambler Realty – Ron remembers. He took my little course. Now we're seeing mixed use. We're seeing that return to people living and working – working where they live and living where they work. And that's not just commercial. It also includes some industrial space, some incubator space. We see lofts in New York that are in factory buildings, that sort of thing. And it gives us an opportunity to have some intriguing, unique kinds of housing in West Hartford. At some point, you're going to be dealing with sites that are contaminated. And when that happens, it's not really a zoning issue that prevails, it's an environmental protection issue. And you end up dealing with whether the property can be remediated to meet residential standards. And that's all regulated by DEEP. So I wouldn't be terribly concerned about the problem of an unsafe site becoming a residential site.

President Slifka: Okay, anybody else? Mr. Kavalier?

Mr. Kavalier: Just a very quick question and I'm not sure if you'd be aware of this. Do you know if other communities with the bus way coming in, rail lines in Connecticut – if other communities are making similar moves to prepare for possible TOD?

Mr. Alair: I don't. I don't know if Ron does.

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes, sir. There's a bus way committee that's been meeting for several months and communities are looking at rezoning property near the bus stations in hope and expectation that developers will show up.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Kavalier. Anyone else? Okay. Alright, if nothing else, Mr. Alair, I'll read in the record – letter dated May 7, 2014 from town planning and zoning commission recommending approval and letter dated April 25, 2014 from capital region council

of governments finding no apparent conflict with regional plans and policies or the concerns of neighboring towns. If there is nothing else, we will close the public hearing.

Public hearing closed at 10:50 p.m.

Essie S. Labrot
Town Clerk/Council Clerk

ESL/kc